**DOCUMENT RESUME**

ED 324 981 FL 800 260

| | |
|---|---|
| AUTHOR | Powell, Beth |
| TITLE | Conflict Resolution, Communication, and Problem-Solving: Part IV of the Biloxi, Mississippi Family English Literacy Curriculum. |
| PUB DATE | 90 |
| NOTE | 8p.; A publication of the Biloxi ESL/Bilingual Education Project. |
| PUB TYPE | Guides - Classroom Use - Guides (For Teachers) (052) |
| EDRS PRICE | MF01/PC01 Plus Postage. |
| DESCRIPTORS | Class Activities; Classroom Communication; Classroom Techniques; *Conflict Resolution; English (Second Language); *Family Programs; *Interpersonal Communication; Listening Skills; *Literacy Education; *Problem Solving; Role Perception; School Surveys; Student Motivation; Teacher Attitudes; Teacher Qualifications; *Teacher Role; Tutors |
| IDENTIFIERS | Family English Literacy; Mississippi (Biloxi) |

ABSTRACT

The perceptions of tutors and instructors in the Biloxi Family English Literacy Program concerning their professional roles are summarized, and suggestions are made for improving classroom communication. Teacher responses to a survey indicate specific desirable teacher characteristics and qualifications, including interpersonal communication and problem-solving skills. Techniques for effective communication include the following: (1) active listening skills (putting oneself in the other's place, showing understanding with non-verbal behavior, restating the other's important thoughts and feelings, avoiding common communication errors, and using expressions of encouragement, restatement, reflection, summarization, clarification, and validation); (2) taking responsibility in communication (not chastising or giving orders, expressing one's own feelings in the first person, and brainstorming options and choosing solutions cooperataively); and (3) tutor activities in support of both teacher and students. Tips for retaining students by maintainig high school interest and motivation include always having another way to state or illustrate an idea, not equating students' child-like language with child-like thinking, using current events, understanding and remembering student needs and goals, having specific goals, getting consensus, being non-judgmental, and being aware of individual student situations. (MSE) (Adjunct ERIC Clearinghouse on Literacy Education)

**********
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
**********

ED324981

# CONFLICT RESOLUTION, COMMUNICATION, AND PROBLEM-SOLVING: PART IV OF THE BILOXI, MISSISSIPPI FAMILY ENGLISH LITERACY CURRICULUM

Prepared by:

Beth Powell, Educational Consultant
Biloxi ESL/Bilingual Education Project
340 Nichols Drive
Biloxi, MS 39530

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
B. Powell

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

X This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

FL800260

## CONFLICT RESOLUTION, COMMUNICATION AND PROBLEM-SOLVING

### WAYS TO ENHANCE THE INSTRUCTOR-TUTOR RELATIONSHIP

Recently, the instructors and tutors of the Biloxi Family English Literacy Program were polled to find out how they interpreted their professional roles. The following is their feedback:

### RESPONSES OF TUTORS

A. Should be willing to work independently of the teacher

B. Can work under the supervision of the teacher

C. Can follow a set pattern, when in place.

D. Should be prepared to do what the teacher asks him/her to do.

E. Should be willing to interact with the students

F. Should be able to accept criticism openly

G. Should be dependable

H. Should carry out the instructions upon first being asked

I. Should back up the instructor

J. Should be flexible

K. Should be understanding of everyone's religion/beliefs, age, etc.

L. Should have some knowledge of education

M. Should be bilingual, preferably in same language of majority of students

RESPONSES OF INSTRUCTORS

A. Should be willing to work "with" tutor

B. Should be able to communicate with students about what students need and want

C. Should be able to sort through which instructional activities and techniques work and which ones don't work in the classroom

D. Should be confident

F. Should be willing to listen to tutor if suggestions are needed

If above responses reflect how all the tutors and instructors view their professional working relationship, and have no problems in adhering to what they have outlined as their responsibilities to one another, then interpersonal conflict may be at a minimum. However, conflict is a natural characteristic of all working and social relationships and cannot be avoided.

We are all unique individuals with diverse needs and expectations for ourselves and others, and sometimes conflict is just inevitable. It is important to deal with interpersonal problems as they arise within the classroom, since as has been stated before, "what resists, persists." If the parties involved in the conflict delete the need to control the outcome, if they have specifically outlined job descriptions, and if they are willing to effectively communicate and jointly problem-solve with each other, then most of their problems can be resolved in a positive fashion.

What follows are some skills to keep in mind for more effective communication:

## Active Listening Skills

1. Put yourself in the other person's place.

2. Show understanding by non-verbal behavior.

   --Tone of voice
   --Eye contact
   --Facial expressions
   --Gestures
   --Posture

3. Restate the other's important thoughts and feelings.

4. Do not:

   --Interrupt
   --Give advice
   --Bring up similar problems from own experience

5. Listen actively

   Encourage: "I see."

   Restate: "In other words..."

   Reflect: "So, you feel that..."

   Summarize: "As I see it, you're saying that..."

   Clarify: "When did you start feeling this way...?"

   Validate: "I appreciate what you're saying."

Remember, one cannot resolve conflict nor communicate effectively if one does not delete the need to control the outcome (or the other person). Keep the following in mind:

## Ways to Take Responsibility in Communication

1. Don't chastise the other person. That always encourages the other person to react angrily or in a shame-based manner.

   Don't: "Why didn't you tell me you were feeling this way?"

   Do: "I'm glad we're finally talking about this."

Don't: "I can't believe you've waited so long to bring this up."

Do: "Thanks for helping me be aware that there was a problem."

Don't: "Why haven't you started yet?"

Do: "Was I clear enough? I hope I didn't sound confusing."

2. Never give orders. Being ordered to do something brings out the aggressive (or passive-aggressive) behavior in all of us.

Don't: "Go make these copies for me."

Do: "Can you please go make these copies?"

Don't: "We need to talk right now."

Do: "Can we talk about something?"

3. Give "I" + feeling messages to let someone know how something is affecting you. Don't blame the other person for your unrest (whether it's warranted or not).

Don't: "You never listen to me."

Do: "Sometimes I feel like I'm not being listened to, and when this happens, I feel like my knowledge doesn't count.

4. Jointly brainstorm options and cooperatively choose solutions that everyone involved can live with.

Don't: "Well, I guess I'll just have to do it myself from now on."

Do: "Can you help me figure out some ways in which we can get this job done so that you feel good about what you're doing and I feel good about what I'm doing?

When tutors and instructors clearly understand and agree upon their professional roles in the classroom, a lot of conflict is

positively avoided. What follows are some suggestions as to how tutors can actively assist in the multi-level classroom setting:

--Tutors can construct learning games and aids.

--They can perform one-on-one tutoring or small group instruction.

--They can take over the class when the instructor is unavailable.

--They can type up student-created activities and copy enough for all to have a copy of each other's work.

Student-Created Activities

A. Poems
B. Language Experiences
C. Wishes
D. Dreams
E. Problem-Posing Activities
F. Recipes
G. Letters

--Tutors can create newspaper activities and lessons

--They can role play with the instructor (and/or students) various real-life situations, like going to the bank or to the hospital.

--They can help the instructor with paper work.

--They can record personalized language tapes for students to take home and listen to.

--They can circulate among the students while the teacher is conducting class to help those who need assistance.

--They can write on the board for the instructor.

--They can have students read individually to them or can read to individual students.

--They can work with individual students on their handwriting skills.

--They can lend an "empathic ear" to students who just need someone to talk to.

--They can help students understand and attend to outside, pressing life demands such as interpreting their phone bills, etc.

--They can support students in their efforts to succeed.

--They can pair off with students to practice dialogues.

## WHAT MAKES THE BILOXI FAMILY ENGLISH LITERACY PROGRAM WORK

### TIPS FOR RETAINING STUDENTS

Many of the teachers and tutors of the project were surveyed to determine how they felt they were able to maintain such high student interest in their classes. What follows are their responses:

A. Always have at least one other way to say what you just said.

   Example: illustrations, pictures, other realia

B. Never assume the students' thinking is child-like just because the students' English may be child-like.

C. Always bring in current events from their country. And don't be afraid to tape the news. PRM is a wonderful source.

D. Always keep the students' goals in mind. Their goals change as they acquire more language.

E. Always decide what your goals are.

F. Never let the students completely guide the goals they "think" they need. Help them decide, and then get a concensus.

G. Always be a non-judgmental mediator for the family. After all, the project is about <u>family</u> English literacy.

H. Never be judgmental.

I. Always interview the students at the onset and make sure you understand their needs, and what is important to them.

J. Always be aware of age, backgrounds (personally, educationally, spriritually, etc.), and how long the person has been in the U.S.A.

END

U.S. Dept. of Education

Office of Education
Research and
Improvement (OERI)

ERIC

Date Filmed

March 29, 1991